MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

KABIR

BY

PRABHAKAR MACHWE



KABIR

Prabhakar Machwe

KABIR

MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

KABIR

by
Prabhakar Machwe

Foreword by
Hazari Prasad Dwivedi



Sahitya Akademi

SAHITYA AKADEMI

Rabindra Bhavan, 35, Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi 110001
Rabindra Sarobar Stadium, Block V-B, Calcutta 700029
29, Eldams Road, Teynampet, Madras 600018
172, Mumbai Marathi Grantha Sangrahalaya Marg, Dadar, Bombay 400014

First Published 1968
Second Edition 1977
Third Edition 1984

Rupees Four

Published by the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi
and printed at Sanjay Printers, Delhi 110032.

Foreword

My FRIEND Dr P. Machwe has presented a very good account of Kabir, the great religious teacher of the fifteenth century, in this small book. There was a conflict between two great religions—Hinduism and Islam. Kabir tried to bring both of them nearer to each other by criticizing and attacking the meaningless rituals and customs of both and by preaching the ultimate goal of both as one and identical. He was a staunch devotee of Rama who, according to him, is neither an incarnation of Vishnu nor has any attributes or personal form. His 'Rama' was not at all different from the 'Rahim' of the Muslims. His more practical teachings stress the strict moral conduct and refute superstitious beliefs. In the field of love and dedication towards Rama, his language is sweet and serene but in the sphere of social reform it becomes very strong and provocative. Nanak and the other great Sikh Gurus had a very high respect for him. He vehemently criticized the caste system of the Hindus. He spoke strongly against idol-worship, belief in incarnation of God, notions of gaining bliss in the other world by taking bath in sacred rivers and the like. He equally criticized the Muslims for their orthodox adherence to mosques, performance of Sunnat, practices of Ajan, Namaz and Roza and the like.

What makes Kabir's poetry great is the depth of his personal spiritual experience and dignity of thought which he wants to convey in very simple language and non-conventional way. He is highly aggressive when attacking meaningless dogmas but remarkably free from any kind of bitterness. He is at his best when in a mood of divine love with the Absolute—'Listen to me, friend. He understands who loves. If you feel not love's longing for your Beloved one, it is vain to adorn your body, vain to put unguent on your eyelids'. 'The pain of separation from God is

like a serpent, which sits in this body and cannot be cast out by any magic spell; he who is separated from Rama cannot exist and if he does, he goes mad.'

This kind of conception of intense love towards the supreme lover has affinity with the love propagated by the Sufis.

From the Natha Yogis Kabir inherited a strong sense of disapproval of the ritualistic practices and superstitions but he did not spare even the Yogis themselves. He felt that these Yogis also were giving unnecessary emphasis on ritualistic aspects of Hatha-Yoga, ignoring the Bhakti or devotional love altogether. He pleaded for 'Sahaja Samadhi' or the simple union with God.

I shut not my eyes, I close not my ears,
I do not mortify my body;
I see with eyes open and smile,
and behold His beauty everywhere.

Complete surrender of all egoistic tendencies is a prerequisite to his conception of divine love. He says: 'This is not the house of one's maternal aunt where anything can be achieved by shedding tears, here only those can enter who shed their heads first.' Kabir's conception of the divine nature', says E. Underhill, 'is essentially dynamic. It is by the smybols of motions that he most often tries to convey it to us, as in his constant reference to dancing or the strangely modern pictures of that Eternal Swing of the Universe which is held by the cords of love.'

Kabir exerted great influence on the life and literature of medieval India. In Hindi the greatness of his personality can be compared only with Tulasidas, another Bhakta poet of another school of Bhakti.

This book by Dr Machwe gives a very good account of contribution of this saint-poet towards religious tolerance, propagation of fraternity, social reform and literary depth. It will, no doubt, be welcomed by lovers of universal religion as well as of high class literature.

Punjab University
Chandigarh 14
20th October, 1967

HAZARI PRASAD DWIVEDI
Tagore Professor
of Indian Literature

Contents

1

Life

THERE SEEMS to be no unanimity of opinion on the historical data relating to Kabir. Historians and literary scholars as well as the followers of Kabir sect are at variance and the internal evidence in Kabir's writings about himself is very little. Nevertheless an attempt needs to be made to present a tentative biographical sketch, on the basis of such sources as are available, including legends.

In one of Kabir's lines there is a veiled reference to two saint-poets, Jaydev and Namdev, as gurus of Kabir. Jaydev lived in the twelfth century and Namdev in the thirteenth century. There is a reference to Kabir's name in the *Ain-e-Akbari*, written in 1596, as one of the holy men no longer living. On the other hand, Maulvi Ghulam Sarwar gives 1594 as the year of Kabir's birth in his *Khajināt-ul-Asaftyā*, which seems to be incorrect. *Kabir Charit Bodh*, a work held in esteem by the Kabir sect, gives 1398 as the year of birth, which also appears to be improbable. All that can be said with some degree of confidence is that Kabir probably lived in the 15th century. This also tallies with the common belief that Kabir was a contemporary of Sikandar Lodi and had met him. According to Briggs, Sikandar Lodi had come to Kashi in 1494. The Archaeological Survey of India says that Bijli Khan had built the tomb of Kabir Shah on the Ami river in 1450. Dr Ramkumar Varma, however, thinks that what Bijli Khan had erected was not a tomb but a building in memory of Kabir and that the date of the building given in the Survey Report is a mere guesswork.

Kabir is commonly believed to have been the disciple of Ramanand, though Dr Bhandarkar and Dr Mohan Singh do not subscribe to this belief. Grierson gives the date of Ramanand's

birth as 1298. Farquhar and Keay, on the other hand, place it anywhere between 1400 and 1470. Dr Govind Trigunayat has reached the conclusion, after sifting all the available material, that Kabir was born in 1398.[1] All these conflicting views show how unwise it is to be dogmatic on this point.

Kabir was the name given by a Kazi who on opening the Quran came upon this Arabic word which means 'great.' Kabir has said in one of his *dohas* or couplets:

Kabira tu hi Kabiru tu tore nām Kabir
Ram ratan tab pāiye jad pahile tajai sarir.[2]

[Thou art great, you are the same, your name is Kabir. The jewel Ram is found only when bodily attachment is renounced.]

About the place of Kabir's birth there are three opinions: Magahar, Kashi and Belahara village in Azamgarh. The argument in favour of Magahar is that Kabir refers to this place in his works. He writes that he had seen Magahar first before seeing Kashi and that he had re-visited Magahar before his death. Magahar is near Kashi (modern Banaras or Varanasi) and has the mausoleum of Kabir, referred to earlier.

It is true that Kabir spent his life mostly as 'a weaver in Kashi' as he calls himself, and many books of the Kabir sect also adhere to this popular belief. But there is hardly any other evidence that he was born in Kashi. The entry in the *Banaras Gazette* that Kabir was born in Belahara probably owes its origin to the popular legend that he was born in the Lahartara. But there seems to be no reliable evidence in support of thi[s] belief, nor indeed any memorial connected with Kabir or his sec[t] nor any followers in the Azamgarh district.

About Kabir's parents and his caste, too, there are severa[l] versions. Ruling out the miracles that he was born of divin[e] light, or found on a full-blooming lotus in the Lahartara, th[e] two plausible versions are that he was a discarded child born of [a] Brahmin widow (the father being unknown) who was picked u[p] by the Muslim weaver-couple Niru and Nima; or that he wa[s] born to this couple. That his parents died when he was young [is] the only reference one gathers from his poems.

1. Kabir ki Vichārdhārā, 2nd, Edn. p. 24.
2. *Kabir Granthāwali* (ed.) Shyam Sundar Das, p. 262.

Three theories are current about his caste. He called himself in his writings a *jolāhā* and a *kori*. *Jolāhā* means a weaver, and most of the weavers in Varanasi are Muslims. *Kori* is a kind of weaver and in Uttar Pradesh they are considered a lower caste. According to Dr Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Kabir belonged to a caste named *Jugi* or *Jogi* (Kabir refers to his father as *Gosai*), who were weavers converted to Islam. They were followers of the outcaste wandering mendicants called Nath panthis. After the Muslim rule in India, many of them took to Islam; but their earlier habits and ways of thinking continued. In support of his contention Dr Dwivedi puts forth the following arguments: Kabir has called himself a *jolāhā*, but has never referred to himself as a Muslim. Whenever he calls himself 'neither Hindu nor Muslim', he is referring to a caste which was lower than the framework of the four castes. In one of his poems Kabir says that Jogi, Hindus and Muslims were distinct and mutually exclusive groups—

Jogi Gorakh Gorakh karai, Hindu Rām-uchcharai
Musalmān kahe ek khudāi,
Kabirā ko Swāmi ghat ghat rahyo samāi.[1]

[Jogis call upon Gorakh, Hindus chant the name of Rām, Muslims say One Khuda, but the Lord of Kabir pervades every being.]

The tradition that after the death of Kabir his Hindu and Muslim disciples wrangled over the last rites—the Hindus wanting to cremate him and the Muslims to bury him (the legend says that the body was turned into flowers which were shared between the two)—and that he had two gurus, Ramanand and Shekh Taqqi, lends support to the thesis that he was not born to any one orthodox set of beliefs. That he could criticize the dogmatism of both and think in transcendental terms of a universal godhead was because he had sufficient reason to be a nonconformist.

About his education and discipleship too, there are several inferences. That he was not educated in the sense that he did not attend any school or undergo a regular training in language or philosophy or even in the technical skill of weaving is unani-

1. *Ibid*, p. 200.

mously accepted. Dr Mohan Singh maintains that Kabir uses the word 'guru' as God and he had no other teacher or mentor to initiate him in metaphysical and spiritual discipline. He was in fact called nigurā or without a guru. His philosophic thought was mostly intuitive and his spiritual insights were largely self-attained. But Malcolm, Westcott and Dr R. S. Tripathi are of the opinion that Shekh Taqqi was the teacher of Kabir, as stated in *Khajināt- ul-Asafiyā* by Ghulam Sarwar. Though no direct evidence of Sufi affiliation is found in Kabir's writings, it is nevertheless obvious that he was deeply influenced by Sufi thought. The same may also be said of his relation to Ramanand, for though Kabir does not directly refer to him and says 'my guru is in Banaras', the similarity in the teachings of Ramanand and Kabir is very close. Mohasin Fani, the author of *Dabistān-e-Tawārikh* and Nabhadas, the author of *Bhakt-māl* and its commentator Priyadas—all maintain that Ramanand was the teacher of Kabir.

Kabir's family life does not seem to have been happy. Though a relentless Seeker, he did not despise earthly ties, but raised a family and laboured to feed it. Several legends name Loi as his wife, whose parentage is, however, unknown. How and where they were married is also shrouded in mystery. Dr Ramkumar Varma has advanced a theory based, according to him, on internal evidence in Kabir's writings, that Kabir had two wives, one homely, the other pretty. The second wife was called Dhania or Ramjaniya. As the latter name is also used euphemistically for dancing girls, Dr Varma suggests that this second consort was probably a courtesan. Needless to say, this thesis is not accepted by the followers of the Kabir sect, and is indeed resented by them.

It is, however, generally accepted that Kabir had a son named Kamāl and a daughter named Kamāli. It is said that this son as well as his mother Loi did not approve of Kabir's otherworldly ways. This is amply evident in Kabir's writings where he has used almost harsh words in describing his wife—'bad-looking, low-caste, ill-mannered' (*kurupi*, *kujāti*, *kulakhani*)—and she too complains of Kabir's entertaining many sadhus as guests while she herself had to subsist on gram.

Though Kabir was a weaver and weaving was his parental occupation, his heart was not in this profession, neither as a

craft nor as a means of earning. His poetry uses many metaphors from his profession like the loom, the warp and the woof, the coverlets, the shuttle and the spinning wheel, yet he was more concerned with philosophic yearning than with his yarn, more with god-seeking meditation than with his customers.

Tananā bunana sabhu tajyo hai Kabir
Hari kā nām likhi liyo sarir[1]

[Kabir has renounced all spinning and weaving. The name of Hari (God) is imprinted all over the body.]

Kabir was a widely travelled holy man. He says in one of his hymns: 'I have been many times on Haj and to Kaaba.' It is, however, doubtful if he actually undertook the journey or it was merely one of his cryptic poetic utterances, more symbolic and hyperbolic to silence the opponents than factual. But that he did travel widely on pilgrimages in India is proved by many references. Acharya Kshitimohan Sen has referred to Kabir's journey to Gujarat. *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārikh* says that he had been to Ratanpur. In a verse included in the *Adi Granth*, Kabir refers to his pilgrimage to Gomati river-bank, where lived a Muslim holy man whom he calls Pitambar Pir:

Haj Hamāri Gomati tir
Jahān basai Pitāmbar Pir[2]

[My Haj is on the banks of Gomati, where resides the Pitambar (*lit.* yellow-robed) Pir.]

Āin-e-Akbari mentions that Kabir had been to Jagannath Puri in Orissa and *A History of the Maratha People* records his travel up to Pandharpur in south Maharashtra. *Kabir Mansūr*, a work popular among the devotees of the sect, relates that Kabir went to Baghdad, Samarkand and Bokhara. But this again appears to be more of a mental projection than a historical fact. As these places were historically famous and associated with celebrated Persian Sufis, it seemed appropriate that Kabir should have visited them.

Kabir could hardly be said to have been honoured in his lifetime. Indeed, he was not only ignored because of his birth in

1. *Kabir Vāngmay* (ed.) Dr Jaideo Singh, Dr Vasudeo Singh, p. 139.
2. *Kabir Granthāvali* (ed.) Shyam Sundar Das (SSD), p. 330.

a low caste, but jeered at for assuming a preacher's role. He was even physically maltreated. Some people are said to have put him in shackles and beaten him, tying both his hands on his back, as one may gather from his verses, A legend also maintains that Sikandar Lodi was one of his persecutors; Anantdas's *Parichai* refers to it. G. H. Westcott's *Kabir and the Kabir Panth* describes the dual persecution of Kabir both by Hindus and Muslims in these words:

'The plain speaking of Kabir and his general disregard for the conventions of society raised up enemies on every side. According to Kabir Panthi tradition it was Shaikh Taqqi who voiced the feelings of Muhammedans. The famous Pir came before the Emperor Sikandar Lodi and accused Kabir of laying claim to Divine attributes. He urged that such conduct merited the penalty of death. The Emperor issued a warrant for his arrest and sent men to bring him to the court. Not till evening could the men who were sent persuade Kabir to accompany them. Kabir stood before the Emperor, in silence. The Qazi exclaimed, "Why do you not salute the Emperor, you kāfir?" Kabir replied, "Those only are Pirs who realise the pain of others, those who cannot are kāfirs." The Emperor asked him why, when ordered to appear in the morning, he had not come till evening. Kabir replied that he had seen a sight which arrested his attention. The Emperor asked what kind of sight could justify him in disregarding his commands. Kabir rejoined that he had been watching a string of camels passing through a street narrower than the eye of the needle. The Emperor said that he was a liar. Kabir replied, "O Emperor, realise how great is the distance between heaven and earth. Innumerable elephants and camels may be contained in the space between the sun and the moon, and all can be seen through the pupil of the eye which is smaller than the eye of the needle." The Emperor was satisfied and let him go.'

The orthodox Brahmins called him irreligious and carried tales of his intimacy with a woman of ill fame. Upon this the Emperor ordered that Kabir should be put to death. He was accordingly put in chains and placed on a boat which was filled with stones. The boat sank but Kabir reappeared as a boy floating down the stream on a leopard's skin. He was again captured and an attempt was made to burn him alive; this attempt, too, did not succeed. He was then accused of witchcraft

and the people demanded that he should be trampled to death by an infuriated elephant. Between the elephant and Kabir there appeared a lion at whose sight the elephant fled. There are numerous such legends current about Kabir; some are recorded in the accounts written by his disciples and followers.

About the year of his death, there are four different views: some place it in 1447; some in 1511; some in 1517. Anantadas maintains that Kabir lived a long life of 120 years. Dharmadas had started collecting Kabir's works in his lifetime; the date of this first collection is presumed to be 1463. Dr. Shyam Sundar Das believes that Kabir died in 1517. Sir W.W. Hunter gave Kabir's dates in his *Indian Empire* (1892) as 1380 to 1420. Dr Haraprasad Shastri put it as 1398-1518.

Such is the bare outline of a life that was almost legendary. It is no doubt a very vague and unsatisfactory outline considering that Kabir's poetry and philosophy left a deep impress in centuries to follow, not only on Hindi literature but on the common man of northern India. Kabir was no doubt the greatest lyric poet and mystic of early Hindi literature. He was called the 'Indian Luther of 15th century, who may rightly be regarded as the creator of sacred literature in Hindi. He and his successors endeavoured to combine the strict monotheism of Islam with its abhorrence of idolatry with whatever was best and most deeply rooted in the creed of Hinduism. Like Raja Rammohun Roy he had attempted to form a composite creed out of the best elements of the Hinduism and Islam. He based his teachings on the monotheism of the *Upanishads*. He was a great singer and *avadhoot*, an advocate of *Advaitwād*.' (Publisher's Note in the first edition of Bishop Westcott's book, 1907).

There are several portraits of Kabir but none seems to be contemporary. It is a strange phenomenon that in India very few authentic pictorial or sculptural records are available of great poets and literary men, ancient or medieval. No contemporary portrait is available of Kālidāsa or Jnāneshwar, Tiruvalluvar or Nāmdev, Chaitanya or Jaydev. So one has to be content with the oldest amongst the portraits preserved in the British Museum, of which the one in the Calcutta Museum seems to be a copy. The British Museum portrait is supposed to be a later 17th century Mughal miniature. In this picture the saint-poet is shown as sitting at his loom, bare-bodied, with a string of beads on his

neck, which many devotees wear even now. He has two devotees on his two sides, one of whom has a garland on his neck and the other, who seems to be a Muslim, has a musical instrument in his hands. This portrait does not show any beard. Kabir, with beard and also weaving on his loom, is depicted in another painting in the Guru Arjun Deva Gurudwara. The portraits at Kabir Chaura, Banaras, and the one published in *Rāmānanda to Rāmtirtha* and in the *Kabir Vachanāvali* depict him as a Sufi saint; he has a string of beads in his hand and is wearing a conical cap like a faqir's. His earlobes are pierced and he wears round *kunḍals* like the Nātha-panthi jogis. The picture published by Chitrashala, Poona, is a later drawing and it shows Kabir as a Hindu holy man. Very little, indeed, can be inferred from these many pictures and potraits of what Kabir was really like, in looks, dress or form. Maybe, it is in the fitness of things that the great protagonist of the Formless God should have himself remained without a clear-cut identity—'merely a name without a form.'

It may be better at this stage to refer to the various sources from which material about Kabir's biography can be sought. The first reference to Kabir is in *Bhakt-māl* by Nabhadas, supposed to have been composed in 1500 and containing accounts of the lives and miracles of several saints. All that can be gathered from the two stanzas devoted to Kabir in this book is that he was a devotee of Ramananda. A commentary on this work by Priyadas re-affirms this fact and maintains that Kabir was born of a Hindu Brahmin widow and was brought up by Niru and Nimā. This work also says that Kabir was a contemporary of Sikandar Lodi. Kabir is also referred to in the writings of Raidās, Garibdās Dharmadās, Pipā and Tukārām. In the Guru Granth Sāhib, the sacred book of the Sikhs, there are several *salokas* and *rāgas* ascribed to Kabir; and his name occurs in Guru Nānak's verse. Anantdās's *Parichai*, written probably in 1600, corroborates that Kabir was a weaver from Kashi and a disciple of Rāmānand; a contemporary of the Baghel king, Vir Singh, and a victim of Sikandar Lodi's atrocities: and a saint who lived the long life of 120 years.

There are some Persian and Urdu books, too, which mention Kabir's name and some legends about his life. Maulvi Ghulam Sarwar's *Khājināt-ul-Asfiyā* is referred to earlier. Mohsin Fani's *Dabistān-e-Majāhib* and Maulvi Nasiruddin's *Tājkirul Fukrā* both

note that Kabir was a disciple of Rāmānand. *Āin-e-Akbari* refers to the difference of opinion about the tomb of Kabir—some placing it in Ratanpur in district Oudh and others in Puri—and gives its opinion in favaur of the latter.

Westcott in his work, *Kabir and the Kabir Panth*, gives eleven references to the name Kabir in several historical works ascribed to different kinds of holy men, and at varying dates: Kabir Chisti of Nagore who died in Gujarat in 1854; Shaikh Kabir Julaha, who was called Pir Kabir by Muhammadans and Bhagat Kabir by Hindus and who died in 1594; Khwajah Aulia Kabir who visited Bokhara and died in 1229; Syed Kabir-ud-Din Hassan who died in Balakh in 1490; Shaikh Kabir, a resident of Bajaora and an opiate: Shaikh Abdul Kabir or Bala Pir who died in 1539; Shaikh Kabir of Multan who went to Balakh and returned to India and travelled with Akbar, and who died at Fatehpur in 1585; Amir Kabir Mir Syed Ali Hamdani who visited Kashmir in 1379 and died there five years later; Syed Ahmad Kabir, father of Syed Jalal-ud-Din; Kabir-ul-Din Ismail, grandson of Syed Jalal-ud-Din, who died in 1421: and Divan Shah Kabir in whose memory a mosque was built at Jaunpur during the reign of Humayun.

The first five are mentioned in *Khajināt-ul-Asfiyā*. the sixth in *Sair-ul-Aqtab*, the seventh in *Munkakhal-ul-Tawārikh*, the eighth in *Akhbār-ul-Akhyar* and the rest in *Ferishtā*.

It is not only about Kabir's appearance and date that there is such diversity of opinion among historians and literary critics; about his works and his code of beliefs, too, there are many conflicting opinions. Nevertheless, the following assessment of his faith may be hazarded as being more generally accepted than any other.

Kabir was influenced by Upanishadic non-dualism and Islamic monism, but with qualifications Kabir's God was—

Jāke muhn māthā nahin nahin rūpak rūp
Puhup vās te pātlā aisā tatta anūp.[1]

[Who is without face or head, or symbolic form subtler than the flower's fragrance, such an essence is He.]

1. *Ibid.* p. 60.

At the same time Kabir is also deeply influenced by the Vaishnav tradition of Bhakti. There are several poems of his which depict the god-and-man relationship as coloured with Sufi concepts; there are also many others where he makes use of the Tantric and the Siddha or Nath sect terminology. In yet others, he was a *Sahajiyā* who, like a rustic, imbibed many influences and assimilated them all. Thus in some poems of Kabir one finds almost a simple villager's devotion, without any sophistication, and so his songs are sung as folksongs.

(*Kaise din kaṭi hai . . .*)

How shall I pass the day
tell me the way.
This side Ganga,
that side Jamuna,
Please [illegible] ched hut
for me in between, I say.
I will tear my upper garment
into pieces like paper
Please inscribe your face
on my heart for ever
Says Kabir, listen, O sadhus,
take me by my arm
and show the way.

Kabir turned Rāmānanda's Ram with attributes into a formless and attributeless One who is beyond description; as the Gita said, 'Where words fail and the mind cannot reach.'

Another *pada* (song) by Kabir describes God as Word—

(*Shabda ko khoji le . . .*)

Find the word, know the word.
you are nothing but the word,
word is sky, word is hell,
word is in the cell and in the cosmos,
word dwells in speech, word dwells in hearing,
words fancy and build the image,
word is Veda, word is sound,
words sing in myriad ways the scriptures,
words are the chants, words are the tools,
it is word that the guru tells the disciple,
word is the essence, word is the non-essence,
word is form, word is the formless.

Word is the man, word is the woman,
word is the triumvirate,
Word is the visible and invisible *Omkār*,
word is the beginning of the creation,
Kabir says, you examine the word,
word is the creator, O, brother!

Kabir's metaphysics defies categorisation. But his castigation of narrow-mindedness and bigotry in both Hindus and Muslims puts him in the category of fearless social reformers.

He said:

Loga aise bāvare, pāhan pujan jāi
Ghar ki chakiyā kāhe nā puje jehi kā peesā khāi.

[People are such idiots that they go to worship stones. Why don't they worship the grinding stone which grinds for them the flour to eat?]

A strong ascetic note runs through Kabir's thought, with an undertone that the world is a valley of tears. That all things lead to death is his constant refrain. No wonder that some critics have found parallels in Buddhism and Kabir-panth. The Buddhist terms like *Śunya* (void) are repeated by Kabir. In fact some of his lines seem to be almost translations of Nagarjuna's *Śunya-kārika*, as when Kabir says:

Bhāri kahun to bahu darun, halkā kahun to jhooṭh
Main ka jāno Rām kun nainun kabahun na deeṭh.[1]

[I am terrified to call Him heavy, to call Him light would be an untruth; what can I know of Ram, never having seen Him with my eyes.]

Kabir constantly refers to a middle stage between the spoken and the unspoken, between voice and silence. In his criticism of the hypocrisies of the high castes Kabir shares the enthusiasm of the Buddhist and the acidity of the Vajrayānis.

He also shows the influence of the Niranjan sect in some of his hymns. He used mystic phraseology and idiom which is very akin to Gorakhnāth and other Nāth-panthis. The reference to the eight lotuses within the body, the control of breath and the entire method of penance is very much on the pattern of Yoga philosophy.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

As to the vexed question of whether Kabir was a Sufi, we shall have occasion to revert to it later in the chapter on Kabir's philosophy.

In discussing Kabir's works one has to face the difficulty of ascertaining which of them are really his own. A great deal of spurious material has been published in his name by enthusiastic disciples and the lack of a definitive edition makes the task of sifting the authentic from the spurious not an easy one. The bibliography given at the end is to be read, keeping this caution in mind. The works available in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi (Gurmukhi script) and some in English translation are based on orally transmitted material of which no original manuscripts are on record. Different versions of the same song are sometimes seen. The printing press has added to the confusion and even misprints have been religiously interpreted. To read all these works is really like wading through a jungle. For the purpose of this study we have consulted the Hindi editions of his work edited by Shyamsundar Das, 'Hariaudh', Ramkumar Varma and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi as the most standard ones.

In the following chapters an attempt is made to evaluate Kabir's poetry and his place in the development of Hindi language and literature. An estimate of his contribution to philosophic mysticism is attempted in the second chapter. In his writings it is difficult to determine where poetry ends and mysticism begins, in fact both are interwoven as in the hands of a very dexterous weaver. Kabir did not set down anything in writing, he only sang and gave utterance to his intuitive vision, which became household maxims for the generations to come. If poetry could reach the height of a spell, it was here. He poured his soul in pithy, aphoristic *dohās*, each a quintessence of his life-experience.

2

Philosophy

'TRUTH is one, wise men call it differently'—said the Rig-Vedic seer. In the *Śvetaśvatara Upanishad* it is said—Like oil in sesame seeds, butter in cream, water in the river bed, fire in timber, the self dwells within the soul. Realise him through truthfulness and meditation.' The Sufi poet Jalal-ud-Din Rumi (d. 1273) in his Masnavi sings of the One True Light:

The lamps are different, but the Light is the same:
  it comes from Beyond.
If thou keepest looking at the lamp, thou art lost:
  for thence arises the appearance of number and plurality.

Fix thy gaze upon the light, and thou art delivered
  from the dualism inherent in the finite body.
O thou art the kernel of Existence, the disagreement
  between Moslem, Zoroastrian and Jew
  depends on the standpoint.

[Nicholson's rendering]

Kabir's mysticism was of the same kind and degree as that of the Vedantin or the Sufi. For him there was no dualism between the finite and the Infinite, as is well illustrated in the following two quotations from Rabindranath Tagore's *One Hundred Poems of Kabir:*

'O how may I ever express that secrect word?
O how can I say He is not like this, and
  He is like that?
If I say that He is within me, the universe is ashamed,
If I say that He is without me, it is falsehood.
He makes the inner and the outer worlds to be indivisibly one;
The conscious and the unconscious both are his footstools.
He is neither manifest nor hidden,

He is neither revealed nor unrevealed;
There are no words to tell that which He is.'

(*Aisā lo nahin taisā lo*)
Kabir: Tagore, P. 9.

And again:

When He Himself reveals Himself, Brahma brings
into manifestation That which can never be seen
As the seed is in the plant, as the shade is in the tree,
as the void is in the sky, as infinite forms are
in the void—
So from beyond the Infinite, the Infinite comes ;
and from the Infinite the finite extends.
The creature is in Brahma, and Brahma is in the creature:
they are ever distinct, yet ever united. . . .
He Himself is the limit and the limitless:
and beyond both the limited and the limitless is He,
the Pure Being.
He is the Immanent Mind in Brahma and in the creature.
The Supreme Soul is seen within the Soul. . . .

(*Sādho Brahma alakh lakhāyā*):
Kabir: Tagore,P. 6.

It would be easier to follow Kabir's mystic philosophy if we approach it from these three aspects: his concept of God or Brahman, his concept of Soul or Ātman, and his concept of Māyā or the World as Illusion.

Kabir calls Brahma the Primal Principle or the Essence. It is beyond time, space, qualities and attributes. It is unaffected by any change. It is free and ultimate. It is absolute and beyond causation—'Neither to the left, nor to the right, nor in front; neither below, nor above, formless' (*Kabir Granthāvali*, SSD, p. 242). It can only be pointed to. As Gandhiji has put it, 'It is like Euclid's point.'

Kabir's Godhead is *Nirguna* or attributeless. There are generally three attributes, *Sat* (Being), *Rajas* (Becoming), *Tamas* (Non-Being); but Brahma is neither of the three. It is never born, nor does It grow, nor does It die. It merely is (*Tat sat*). 'As snow is caused by water and again snow melts into water, so whatever was came to itself and now nothing more can be said' *Kabir Granthāvali*, p. 13). Inasmuch as It is formless, It is colourless and beyond sensual perception. All categories begin

with It and so It cannot be categorised. 'God is in the world and the world is in God and He permeates everything.'

Khālik Khalak Khalak men Khālik. sab ghaṭ rahyā samāi'
(*Kabir Granthāvali*, p. 104).

But Kabir is not merely a philosopher who stops at the logical impossibility of describing or defining Godhood. Being a poet he sometimes personifies his God and sometimes draws parallels between God-and-soul and lover-and-beloved or beloved-and-lover relationships. Kabir's god transcends both Islamic monotheism and Hindu polytheism. He is Allah and also Ram, and also more, Kabir asks:

For Turks in mosques and for Hindus in temples
both Khuda and Ram are there;
Where mosque and temple is not
who rules supreme there?

[*Gyānsāgar*, p. 63]

This God is Bliss. A material pleasures are naught before that supreme joy. Kabir describes god intoxication as something which never subsides, never lessens. He says that this godly juice is rare and dear, everyone cannot drink it. Shankar and Parvati drank it and became immortal.

This God is Knowledge—pure and abstract. It is truth to be realised. Unlimited, undivided, It is minute like the seed of a banyan, and as vast as the sky. In this form God is Light. The supreme Illumination of the Sufi and the stage where 'neither sun, nor moon, nor stars shine and nor lightning,' as described by the Kathopanishad, is Kabir's godhood. He sometimes describes this Brahma as a lotus which is full-blown and smiles steadily in the pond named our body.

God is *Śabda* (Word). The Yogasutras have described God as Pranava or Om. The Brahmasutras also call Sabda Brahma. In the Nath sect, 'the word is all; it is the lock and it is the key; word knows the word and the word ends in word.' Kabir has a very fine *pada* (song) describing the *Anahad Nād*—'This unlimited word is constantly vibrating.' In another *pada* he says:

O wise men, realise the word
The word from which everything was born, get at It,
The word is the guru, the word is the disciple,
rarely does one know it,

Only that master and that disciple are great,
who know the inner meaning.
Vedas and Puranas are words, they call it Testimony
or Authority
Word makes the gods, wise men and saints, there is
no end to this fathomless word;
Hearing this word, people change their cloaks,
word determines love.
All the six systems are mere word,
word makes you monks.
The word gave birth to the world and this body,
the word made all this spread out.
Kabir says, wherever is the word,
the difference of worlds is strange.

[Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, *Kabir*, *pada* 57. p. 268]

Kabir used many terms, received through Nath sect, from Buddhists or Śunya-vādis. He describes his Supreme as a Void or Nothingness. But his Śunya is different from the orthodox Buddhist position. It is very near Shankar's Brahma which is beyond speech. Kabir describes his god as the experience of sweetness enjoyed by a dumb person. It cannot be communicated, it is inexpressible, indescribable. The mystic trance, to which Kabir refers again and again, is some.hing of this divine madness. Many a time Kabir takes recourse to the negative terminology, on the lines of the Vedantin's 'Not this, not that'. In the *Ken Upanishad* there is a passage where God is described as a stage where 'neither the eyes. nor the speech, nor the mind, nor knowledge can reach.' Kabir also describe his Brahma as *sans* everything.

Beyond Vedas, beyond differences,
beyond sin or virtue,
Beyond knowledge, beyond meditation,
beyond solid or void,
Beyond dress, beyond alms,
beyond all snobbery and form,
Kabir says, beyond the three worlds,
that Essence unmatched is.

[*Kabir Granthāvali*, p. 103]

But this Nirguna Brahma (God without attributes) suddenly becomes very personal, like father and mother, like the husband ('O newly married bride sing marriage songs, my husband Raja Ram has come home'), like the guest, like the master ('I am but

a dog of Rām'). And this same almost Personal God becomes, in some other poems of Kabir, an impersonal, symbolic formlessness. Kabir is full of such paradoxes.

Ultimately Kabir's God is Name. Call It by any appellation, it matters little. Jaydev invoked Rām and Govind, Nāmdev Vitthal, and the various saints have used various names. Kabir, in one of his *padas*, enumerates all such names and comes to the conclusion: 'Called by any name, You remain the same!'

Kabir's conception of the soul is no less enigmatic and full of apparent contradictions. It is the living being, the breath, the self, the ego, the sexless entity, the Atma which is a microcosm in this microcosm. It is the mind, the senses, the three types of Purusha of Samkhya—the manifest, the latent and the knower. Far Kabir knowledge of self is the supreme discipline the be-all and end-all of every human life. The pitchers are of different forms, but are made of the same clay. Though the cows are of different colours, the milk one gets from them is of one colour. It is like the lamp on the doorstep, illumining both ways, inside and outside. It is undying, unborn, indestructible, something on the lines of the Gita's famous passage where the red slayer may think that he kills, but 'nothing kills, nor anything can be killed.'

In the *Śvetaśvatara* Upanishad, 'Soul is neither male, nor female, nor neuter in gender. It assumes its form according to the embodiment it seeks.'[1] Kabir describes it thus:

It is neither human, nor divine,
It is not the holy man demanding service,
It is neither a Jogi, nor an Avadhoot,
It has no mother, no offspring,
It is neither a householder, nor a mendicant,
It is neither royal, nor beggarly.
It is neither Hindu nor Sheikh,
Nobody saw it being born or dying.

The *Ātman* is formless, boundless, beyond all change. 'It is like a drop in the ocean, it cannot be separated, the ocean-ness is in the drop-ness'. The soul is non-dual, self-illuminated, ever-living, the finest of the fine. It leaves the cage called body at a

[1] *Naiva stree na pumnā:sa na caiwayam napum ak ah*
Yadyachharir yadante tenātene sa yujyaté. 5/10.

certain time. Kabir uses the similes from his weaving profession: 'This body is like a garment which must wear out with use. So why be attached to it?'

The soul is synonymous with God. Kabir describes its multiple identity by various metaphors : The soul is the tree, the soul is the sun, the ray, the light and that which is visible with its help. It is the bird and the cage and the sky beyond; it is the lamp, the wick, the oil and the light that illumines the darkness all around. As the lotus is not affected by pure water or dew, or the mire surrounding it, the soul is in it and yet not in it. The soul is wind, the soul is fire, the soul is water, the soul is word and the mind all combined. The *Taittariyopanishad* says, 'Bliss is the soul and God bliss is the beginning and the end.' In Kabir one finds the echo, 'Anand (bliss) is the base of all gods and souls.' [*Kabir Granthāvali*, p. 187].

As regards the two states of the soul of which the Vedantin speaks, namely, that which is bound by world-and-life and that which is free, Kabir hints—'One knows oneself by oneself', and says in one of his *sakhis:*

> *Surati* is lost in *nirati*, *nirati* remained without support,
> But one who knew *surati* and *nirati* both,
> for him the doors were opened automatically.
>
> (*Parchā Ko anga*)

Here *surati* stands for the bound or attached soul and *nirati* for the free or the non-attached one. Kabir discusses the causes of the error-bound soul, the directionless soul, and the soul which is trying to break through. Ultimately to be free of all attachments and to reach the higher stage, the soul has to be ego-less, without enmity, seeking enlightenment.

Of no less interest is Kabir's philosophic attitude to worldly matter or *māyā*. In the Upanishads *māyā* has been described as the Life-force of Brahma. It is Nature and also primordial Darkness (*Avidyā*). The Gita calls *māyā* ignorance, the jugglery of the three qualities. Shankar calls it Illusion and something nearer to what modern linguistic philosophers would describe as 'a mental structure'. Kabir uses many metaphors to describe the power of this phenomenon. He says that this creeper is so peculiar that:

If you cut it, will grow more,
if you water it, it will fade and droop,
this creeper of many qualities baffles description.
[*Kabir Granthāvali*, SSD, p. 86]

It is like a she-serpent giving birth to many of her own kind. it is ephemeral and ever-changing. It is the great churner. It causes sorrow. It is subtle like a curtain of mist, it is latent yet mainfest like the fire inside cotton. It is like the painted harlot seducing the soul in open market. It is the source of differentiation and therefore of all creation.

One who has created this picture
is the real puppeteer
But fie upon those persons
who take the picture as mere picture.

Intimately connected with this general framework of Kabir's philosophy is his concept of renunciation and ultimate emancipation. How to escape this cycle of sorrow has been the primary concern of every Indian seer and saint. Kabir also refers to Immortality as one of the ultimate values to be sought after. To break away from the revolving wheel of birth-copulation-and-death and to let the flame pass into the Flame is what he calls the great meeting with the Infinite. His concept of deliverance is very much like that of Yoga philosophy or as described in Buddhism. Nāgārjuna, the Buddhist phenomenologist, has described the state of *Nirvān* as the ultimate meaningful truth (*paramārtha satya*). Kabir calls that state a safe and fearless condition (*nirbhai pad*). Once the devotee is engaged in helping and serving all and has achieved an equanimity of vision he need not be afraid of anything. If one has to be afraid of anything, it is of the evil within:

Once one knows oneself,
one is lost in One
Kabir says, if you know yourself,
all coming and going vanishes.
[*Kabir Granthāvali*, SSD, p. 90]

For Kabir the bondage is only a subjective illusion. Once it is broken the non-duality is the only experience left. 'The pitcher is in water and water is in the pitcher; once the pitcher is broken, water is mingled in water.' If a reflection falls in two pitchers

full of water floating in the water, and the pitchers break, the reflection is scattered and yet reflected in larger water—the reflection remains one. So for Kabir, freedom from bondage is not an external matter, not something induced by exterior causes. It is only from within that this urge to get away from the illusory arises; and once one reaches that state of *Jivanmukta*, all the darkness of the world and the blindness of the soul ceases.

For attaining this stage Kabir prescribes a detailed code of discipline (*sādhanā*), of controlling the breath and the senses, but we need not discuss it here. It might, however, be mentioned in passing that Kabir-panthis or orthodox followers of the Kabir cult are themselves not all agreed about the ritualistic practice. It is an elaborate psychological process of creating a kind of spiritaul awareness through physical discipline, which is also prevalent in different Yoga systems. Kabir's was an electric way combining the best in different kinds of Yoga practices—Hatha, Mantra, Laya, Sahaja and Rāja Yogas, with a metaphysical overtone to the monk-like daily routine.

It is as a social and ethical reformer that Kabir claims the attention of modern radicals inasmuch as he, like the Buddha, denounced the folly of social inequity and the injustice perpetrated in the name of caste. Kabir ridiculed the orthodoxy of both Hindus and Muslims and challenged them, like any later scientific rationalist, to justify their sham and hypocrisy.

A realist, he was not ashamed to sing:

> The hungry cannot be devout,
> please take back this rosary . . .
> I want a half seer of cereal,
> to fill the belly twice a day,
> I want a cot to sleep in,
> be my pillow a wooden frame.
> I utter no lies or hyperboles,
> I only take Thy name, O God.
>
> [Rāg Soraṭha, *Kabir Granthāvali*, SSD, p. 314]

He denounced hoarding and show of wealth, and was against any kind of luxury and indulgence in intoxicants. He preached simplicity and contentment and believed that every one should do physical labour and stick to his own profession; no one should steal another person's property. He did not spare royal greed and political aggrandisement. He asks the question :

'Gathering forces and besieging castles and showing off his prowess—is this the only job of a Badshah (monarch) ? When the emperor dies, what remains of this game?'

'Crores of rupees and many elephants may be there with a king, such a miser's wealth is of no use.'

'The king and his people are basically one—human beings. They stem from the same root—Om.'

Kabir was a bitter critic of all kinds of sectarian and narrow creeds and outlooks. 'Neither the Brahmin is high-caste, nor is the *Shūdra* low. Why hate one another? Hatred is folly.'

External rituals are meaningless. Besmearing the body with ashes, taking a ritual bath three times a day, keeping fasts and going on pilgrimage, flaunting rosaries, repeating god's name loudly and indulging in physical mortification are a butt of great ridicule for Kabir.

Why pour dust on the body (made of dust)?
    Why lave this moving form?
What use repeating the name and counting the beads?

    What use prostrating in a mosque?
What use fasting and kneeling,
    What use Haj and going to Kaaba?

The Brahmin keeps his twenty four *ekadashi* fasts
    And the Kazi keeps his Muharram. . .
['Alah Rāmjeeyun tere nai'—*Kabir Granthāvali* (ed.), M.P. Gupta, p. 301]

He further says in one of his padas:

If God dwelt in the mosque,
    who dwells in the rest of the earth?

If Rām dwells in the Holy place (of pilgrimage)
    and also in the idol,
How could he live in two places at a time?
To the East is Hari,
    To the West Allāh's abode.

Search thy heart, within the inner core,
    Rām and Rahmān live there.
All the men and women of the world
    Your form is in all.
Kabir the lame is of Allāh and Rām,
    Hari and Peer are my guru.
[*Kabir*, H.P. Dwivedi pp. 272-73]

Kabir uses very pointed and pertinent metaphors. 'If by wearing a holy thread a person could be called twice-born, why not call the iron-wheel in the well that always wears a rope a Brahmin?' 'Why does the kazi shout so loudly, standing on the top of the minaret at his morning prayer? Has Allah gone deaf?' 'The goat eats grass and is skinned. What will happen to those who eat the goat?' 'Look at these foolish people who worship the dead! After cremating the dead body at the burning *ghat*, they make a show of great love and attachment. They beat with *ḍaṇḍā* (stick) the living elderly people; when dead they put *Ganges* water in their mouth. They starve the elders when living; when dead they feed the ancestors with rice-balls. The old while alive are always abused and cursed; when dead, there is the ceremony of showing honour and respect (*shrāddha*). Kabir says, I wonder how what is fed to the crow is conveyed to the dead old ancestors!' (*Kabir Gradthāvali*).

Dr Hazari Prasad Dwivedi in his well-known Hindi work *Kabir* (p. 138) argues that Kabir's criticism of mere ritualistic religion was derived from the tradition of Hathayogis and from Kabir's guru Rāmānand. He says: 'In the days when Kabir was preaching, Puranic Hinduism was dominant, but it was the religion of the ordinary householder. In our country there were many other current religious practices. Some crammed Vedas, some renounced the world; some assumed poverty, some were busy in charity; some thought drinking the best form of penance; some practised black-magic and the quack's trade and called themselves Siddhas; some believed in pilgrimage and some in fouling the body with smoke. All these were there, but none was immersed in the name of God. But grace of the *Sadguru* (Ramananda?) Kabir had received the great mantram. There were *munis*, *peers*, naked holy men, *jogi*, *jangam*, Brahmin and *Sanyāsis*, but all were in the meshes of *māyā*. Some sects even carried guns and cannons with their religious procession. Kabir was surprised and asked of the people, "Friends, this is a strange yoga for a *panth* started in the name of Mahādev (Great God or Shiva), people call themselves big *mahants*, meditate in the crowded bazars, and on the least excuse attack with guns and cannon. Did *Dattātreya* ever make an armed attack on his enemies, did Shukadeva ever collect ammunition, did Nārad ever fire a gun? Strange, indeed, are these so-called non-attached whose golden

thrones are shining, who have arrays of horses and elephants and whose pomp is comparable to the millionaire!" From this it would seem that it was something like the march of the Nāgā (naked) sadhus in the Kumbha fair. Thus it was that Kabir began to practise and preach his simple religion of love in the midst of all this strange and odd ritualistic exhibitionism.

Talking of the Hathayogi tradition, Dr Hazari Prasad Dwivedi quotes a very interesting parallel passage from Sarahapād (8th century), an early Sahajyāni Siddha (pp. 142-43): 'Brahmins were born of Brahma's mouth: this happened when it happened. Nowadays they are born in the same way as others are born. Then wherein does the Brahmanism lie? If you say, it is through initiation in ritual (*samskār*), then even a low-caste Chandal can be so initiated. If you say that the Brahmins are holy because they take grass and water in hand and feed the holy fire at *home*—if *mukti* (emancipation) could be had so easily by pouring clarified butter into the fire, then why not allow all to do so? The sacrificial fires may or may not bring *mukti*, but one thing is certain that the smoke that thereby rises does blind the vision.' Such straightforward and forthright criticism as one finds in these early Siddhas was carried forward by Kabir.

> 'The beads are of wood, the gods of stone, the Ganges and the Jamuna are water. Rām and Krishna are dead. The four Vedas are fictitious stories.'

> 'If by worshipping stones one can find God, I shall worship a mountain: better than these stones (idols) are the stones of the flour mill with which men get their corn.'

> 'If by immersion in the water salvation be obtained, the frogs bathe continually. As the frogs, so are these men, again and again they fall into the womb.'

> 'A stone is shaped by the hammer and formed into an image with breasts and feet; if this image be true, then it will eat the hammerer.'

> 'Whilst dwelling in the womb, there is no clan nor caste; from the seed of Brahma the whole creation is made.'

> 'If thou art a Brahmin born of a Brahmin woman, why hast thou not come in another way?'

> 'Whose art thou, the Brahmin? Whose am I, the Sudra; whose blood am I? Whose milk art thou? Kabir says, Who reflects on Brahma, he by me is called a Brahmin.'

'There is impurity in water, impurity in earth. There is impurity at the time of birth, there is impurity in the hour of death, there is impurity in destruction.'

'In the eyes is impurity, in the speech is impurity and in the ears impurity.

'In rising and sitting impurity clings to man, impurity falls into the food.

'The way of ensnaring everybody knows, but few only the way of escape.'

[G.H. Wescott : *Kabir and the Kabir Panth*, pp. 37-40]

It is interesting to note that many utterances and verses of Kabir have also found their way as Sākhis in the Holy Book of the Sikhs called the Ādi-Granth. In Macauliffe's *The Sikh Religion* (Volume 2) and in *Selections from Sacred Book of the Sikhs*, one can come across many interesting passages.

Kabir was not merely a mystic who dwelt in his metaphysical mountain-abode, far away from the madding crowd. From his simple weaver's hut in Banaras where he lived and on the Asighāt, where he is supposed to have died, he saw and observed a great deal of fraud and faleshood practised in the name of religion. And he chose to remain neither deaf nor dumb. He spoke out the truth, which needed much courage, particularly in those days when rationalism was rare and an attack on established religion was deemed the worst type of heresy. But Kabir did it so boldly and effectively that in the end the Hindus had no other option but to honour him as a saint and his way as Kabir-panth.

We conclude this chapter with Tagore's rendering of one of Kabir's poems, '*Tirath men to sab pāni hai*' (p. 50), which gives the substance of his philosophy so poetically expressed:

There is nothing but water at the holy bathing places;
and I know that they are useless, for I have
bathed in them.
The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak;
I know, for I have cried aloud to them.
The Purana and the Koran are mere words;
lifting up the curtain, I have seen.
Kabir gives utterance to the words of experience;
and he knows very well that all other
things are untrue.

3

Poetry

Search the word and know the word
    Follow the word by word
Word is sky and word is underworld
    Word pervades the core and the cosmos
Word is in speech and in hearing
    Word makes the image and the form
Word is Veda and word is the sound
    Word is the scripture sung variously
Word is the visible and the invisible
    Word creates the entire universe
Kabir says you test the word
    Word is God, O brother!

(*Kabir Vachanāvali, p. 189*)

WHETHER mystic poetry should be judged by the same poetic norms as are applied to pure poetry is the subject of a long-drawn debate amongst Sanskrit rhetoricians and Western aestheticians. Partly it is the age-old distinction between the sublime and the beautiful. The indian eclectic writers on poetics in Sanskrit resolved the conflict by calling the joy derived from poetry as akin to divine bliss (*Brahmānanda-sahodarah*)—the two being twin brothers. On the other hand, there are not a few orthodox and conservative critics in Hindi, even today, who do not consider Kabir as a poet, but count him among the saints and devotees who also indulged in some sort of uneven versification. Such critics perhaps put undue premium on polish in technique and parfection of style, etc. But if individuality is one of the characteristics of a major poet, Kabir is without doubt one.

He uses images and symbols that are at times obscure, though not more obscure than the private imagery of some modernist poets. Like Blake or Rilke, he has many passages which sound

simple and yet are deeply charged with metaphysical meaningfulness. The truth is that Kabir was much more than a mere poet. He lived in two dimensions at the same time. For him God-consciousness and poetry were not two analysably separate states of mind. As the mystic Meister Eckhart rightly pointed out, 'For a man must himself be one, seeking unity both in himself and in the One, which means that he must see God and God only. And then he must "return," which is to say he must have knowledge of God and be conscious of his knowledge.' Kabir seemed to be possessed of the same frenzy and so he questions: 'O lotus, why did you fade? The water of the pond was at your stem. You were born in water, lived in water, all the time surrounded by water. No fire was there nearby. And yet why did you die?' (See *Kabir Granthāvali* (ed.) M. P. Gupta, p. 183.)

Language

One of the important keys to this problem of extra-poetical sensibility communicated through poetry is the language used by the poets. Every poet chooses his own idiom, and addresses his own imaginary audience. The greatness of Kabir lies in the fact that he did not care for the language of the sophisticated in those days, namely Sanskrit or the court-language Persian, but composed his verses and songs in a mixed language of his own, which is now called by Hindi scholars *Sadhukkari* (language of the *sadhus*). As Dr Govind Trigunayat says in his *Kabir ki Vichārdhārā*, 'Kabir did not use one language. In his *bāni*, one comes across a mixture of Hindi, Urdu, Persian and many dialects like Bhojpuri, Punjabi, Marwari and so on.'[1] The first authentic collection of Kabir's works is *Kabir Granthāvali*, edited by Dr Shyamsundar Das on the basis of two manuscripts dated Samvat 1561 and 1881 (A.D. 1508 and A.D. 1828); the other is *Sant Kabir* by Dr Ramkumar Verma which contains Kabir's writings in The *Granth Sāheb* too. In both these works we find (1) Punjabiness, (2) noun and verb forms of Bhojpuri, (3) some Khari Boli forms, (4) language according to subject-matter, (5) many words from regional languages, (6) simple and direct expression, (7) symbolism and technical allusiveness, (8) no adherence to any one standardised form.'

1. p. 295. 2nd edition.

Achārya Rāmachandra Shukla writes in his *Hindi Sāhitya kā Itihās* that the saint-poets of Hindi used Khari Boli which they received as a legacy from the Siddhas. But Dr Trigunayat differs from this opinion and maintains that Kabir did not confine himself to *Purbi* (eastern U. P. dialect of Banaras) only but made use of many other dialects so as to make himself more communicable to saints coming from other regions. Kabir uses Persianized Hindi when he talks of Hindu Pandits. In his language one comes across Bengali verb forms like 'achhilo.' There are also words from Rajasthan and Lehanda. His language has a peculiarity that it is at once simple and yet difficult to interpret. Added to it is the great difficulty which scholars have to contend with, namely, the different forms of the same text—due, may be, to oral transmission. Many words have undergone such transformation and even corruption that it is difficult to decipher and excavate the correct original form.

Kabir's language in *Ulaṭ-bānsiyān* is also called, on account of its obscurity and vagueness of meaning, *Sandhābhāshā* (according to Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya) or *Sandhyābhāshā*, the language of the meeting-point or the language of the evening. Dr S. B. Dasgupta has discussed it in his *Obscure Religious Cults*, and given different reasons for such reddle-like usages. Either they were deliberately done to confound the opponent, or because of the mixture of *Apabhramśa* and *Hindi*, or such was the language on the borders of Bengal and Bihar. In Sanskrit '*Sandhi*' is used even for an allegorical language and, maybe, poets like Kabir used it consciously, as the Tantriks did to hide some secret notions or esoteric practices not considered proper in ordinary society. Whatever the reasons, in Kabir one comes across many such poems which apparently seem to be contrary to all rational meaning. Maybe, Kabir did it in fun to confound the Pandit who took recourse to very intricate Sanskrit. Some examples of this kind of *Sandhyābhāshā* are given below under 'paradoxes.'

Paradoxes

These *padas* of Kabir are also called *Ulaṭ-bānsiyan* or *Ulaṭ batiyān* (inverted bamboos or inverted talks). One example is in Kabir Granthāvali (p. 141):

Such wonderment did the guru tell
I remained stunned
The mouse fought the elephant
one rarely sees
The mouse entered into a hole
serpent afraid ran
Contrarily, mouse devoured the serpent
it was a great wonder
The ants uprooted the mountain
and brought in open
The cock fought the human
the fish ran after water.
The cow was milking the calf
the calf was giving milk
Such wonderment happened
the deer killed the tiger
The hunter hid himself in the thicket
the rabbit shot arrows
Kabir says make him a guru
who tells you the meaning of this poem.

Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi discusses these poems in a chapter entitled 'Yogic Allegories and *Ulaṭ-bānsiyan*', and quotes from *Kabir Granthāvali* (p. 141) another passage, and gives a chart of the three different interpretations by Vishvanāth, Vichārdās and the traditionalists of 23 such symbolic terms in this *pad*:

[*Santan jagat neend nā kyai. . .*]

O Saints don't sleep while awake
Death does not eat, epochs don't cover
the body is not eroded by old age
Contrary-wise the Ganges absorbs the ocean
and darkness eclipses the sun
The sick man kills nine constellations
the reflection in water gives light
Without feet one runs in ten directions
without eyes sees the world
The rabbit devours the lion, such wonder who can solve?
The inverted pitcher does not sink in water
the straight one is filled with it
The reason why men are different
with guru's grace they get through
Inside the cave one sees the whole world
outside nothing is seen
The arrow upturned and killed the hunter
only the brave can follow

The singer when requested cannot sing
the dumb sings always
The juggler's game is seeing the onlookers
Anhad cause is increased
The statement inspects itself
all this is an inexpressible tale
The earth enters into the sky
this is the word of a man
Without glasses nectar oozes
the river keeps away the water stored
Kabir says he alone is immortal
who drinks *Rām-Sudhārasa.*

Obviously in their first reading such compositions sound very much like irrational mutterings. But all these words have some symbolic meanings: the mind is generally compared with fish, weaver, hunter, elephant, *niranjan*; the soul is referred to as son, calf, hunt, lion, mouse, bee, yogi; the *māyā* is harlot, woman, she-goat, cow and cat; the world is like a forest or an ocean; the senses are the five maidens and friends and so on. Such songs also refer to certain numbers: five stands for elements or senses; three for qualities or three tenses or worlds; eight for the Hath-yogi's eight centres in the body, more or less like the glandular endocrinic seats secreting hormones. In a *dohā* like—

Sixty-four lamps lighted in fourteen moons
What moon is there in the house where Govind is not.

sixty-four stands for arts and fourteen for Vidyās or achievements.

Such paradoxes have a long tradition dating from the Upanishads. The inverted tree and the two birds are well known. In *Taittariyopanishad* there is a passage which says, 'the sky rests in the earth and the earth rests in the sky.' It was carried further by *Vajrayāna* Buddhists. Perhaps Kabir got it through them.

Metres

One does not come across a variety of metres or any virtuosity in their use in Kabir. He uses the common metres like *dohā* or *sākhi*, *sabad* and *Ramaini* which were *chaupais* or *chaupāi-dohās*. Mainly they are two-line pithy couplets or longer *pads* set to music. Many tunes are taken from folk-songs. It is possible that community singing was responsible for the many

repetitions that occur in them. None of the metres used are bound by any rigid rules of prosody. They seem to have their own rules and Kabir follows his own pattern of internal rhymes.

M.A. Ghani wrote in his *History of the Persian Language at the Moghul Court* that the six lines beginning with '*Haman hai ishk mastāne haman ko hoshyāri kyā*'...might be deemed as the first Urdu ghazal ever composed. But this statement is not verified. There are earlier ghazals in the Dakhani variety of Urdu and a ghazal by a Brahmin named Chanderbhān is mentioned in *A History of Urdu Literature* by Rambabu Saksena. Though Urdu or Persian metres were not adopted by Kabir, it seems that he had heard the poetic compositions of Sufis and many allusions to love and divine intoxication in Kabir seem to be patterned on them.

Kabir was not a conscious urbane poet. He wanted to communicate his ecstasy and agony in any language which came handy to him. He did not wait for the chiselled word or care for the applause of the connoisseur. So there is a roughness and ruggedness about his writing which lends it a rare charm. His verse-pattern is very simple and yet haunting. Most of his *dohās* and *padās* end with the composer's name woven in it. It was a kind of copyright in those days, as there were innumerable imitators and plagiarists. The seal of originality was necessary and so in the medieval songs of saint-poets one always comes across such lines as 'Mirā says, O Girdhar Nāgar' or 'Tulsidās says. . .' or 'Surdās remembers Shyām. . .' and so on.

Kabir's *dohās* should be given a special mention as later Hindi poets have written several compilations of 700 *dohās* called *satsai* on the lines of the medieval Ārya-saptashatis, though Kabir did not care for the magic number 700.

Other poetic qualities

Marathi poet Namdev, Punjabi poet Nanak, Telugu poet Vemana, Kannada poet Basaveshwar and Gujarati poet Akho share with Kabir a rare kind of catholicity and humanism which broke all conventions of caste, creed or cult. This was all the more difficult in that age when orthodoxy had a firm hold over the minds of the people. Kabir is being re-evaluated as the first rebel poet and the earliest modernist in Hindi criticism (see in *Purbi Times*, Kabir Special Number, June 1966, articles by

Yashpal, Sampurnanand, Amritlal Nagar, Ali Sardar Jafri, Firaq Gorakhpuri, Prakashchandra Gupta, E. Chelyshev and others). One young critic, Thakur Prasad Singh, has in all seriousness gone to the extent of calling Kabir the grandfather of Beat poetry in Hindi.

All these articles referred to above emphasise on the way Kabir takes the reader or listener almost by storm. The impression left after reading Kabir is that of a person who is transformed or touched to the core. This Kabir achieves by drawing from his own personal experience as a weaver or as a person persecuted by high-caste Hindus or conservative Muslims, and transforming his material into a universal and deeply moving concern. His personal protest becomes the voice of the dumb millions.

According to Firāq Gorakhpuri, Kabir charged the language of the rural masses of eastern U.P. with a new meaning. He electrified their dialect. Firaq cites various examples of this metamorphosis wrought by Kabir, who was formally unlettered and yet one of the greatest contributors to Indian literature. Kabir regarded human life as a passing phase and so was aware of the 'horror in the handful of dust', as T.S. Eliot would have said. The feeling of this 'worm within the rose' is well expressed in such *dohās* as—'We know not what the quarter of a second may bring and yet we make plans for the morrow; death comes suddenly as the hawk pounces down on the partridge.' 'The gardener comes to the garden and seeing him the buds cry out: the full-blown flowers are called today, tomorrow our turn will come.' 'The earth said to the potter, why do you trample on me? The day will come when I shall trample on you.' A similar *rubāi* is found in Omar Khayyam's *Kuzā-nāmāh*.

Gandhiji included the following song of Kabir in his daily prayer book—(*Jhini jhini bini chadariyā . . .*)

What is the warp and what is the woof
    what are the threads from which the *chādar* is woven?
Inglā and *Pinglā* are the warp and woof
    Sushaman are the threads from which the *chādar* is woven.
Eight are the lotuses and ten are the spinning wheels
    five are the elements and three the qualities of the *chādar*.
The Master required ten months to weave it
    and made it well-woven by hitting it and beating it.

This *chādar* the gods, men and sages used
and used and soiled the *chādar*.
Kabir Das has used it very carefully
and kept the *chādar* back as it is. (*Shabdāvali* p. 74)

Weaving was the profession of Kabir. Gandhiji also gave much weight to spinning and weaving. In several matters there is great similarity in these two great men of India, though functioning in different periods and in different circumstances.

Kabir's poetry has another great quality: it does not stale. Kabir tried to put his finger on the basic yearnings of man, the eternal quest for internal peace, the 'angst' of a person functioning in a maladjusted society. Where religions turn into hide-bound ritualistic codes, where philosophies turn into mere verbal jugglery and linguistic labyrinths, where there is a crisis of conscience and the leadership is lame, Kabir's poetry serves as a great inspiration. At times he seems to shock us by ripping open the shams and exposing the double-talk and double-think of the so-called respectable learned; yet there is no note of despair. Kabir's poetic world is not a vale of tears, not merely a dark night of separation, not an abyss which can never be crossed. He has the robust and rebellious spirit of a rustic. He has always a Hope Beyond. No doubt the springs of this Hope are spiritual and it may be argued that today in an age of 'no values', all that sounds unreal. But Kabir has much left in his poetry, even when one does not agree with his theism, and so to enjoy Kabir one need not be a *Kabir-panthi*. Herein lies the secret of his ever-continuing greatness as a poet: he transcends time and place. His poetic vision is larger and higher. He did not bother about what kind of political set-up was in Hindustan in the thirteenth or fourteenth century; he did not even care for the literary heresies or traditional tentacles of his times. He just did what Nietzsche would have said, his 'Yea-saying'. This requires great courage in any age. Kabir, had that daring to say the truth and the heroism to suffer its consequences. Kabir's poetry, therefore stands in a very different category, as it breaks through many conventional bondages. It is the poetry of a Free Spirit.

4

Translations

Avinās dulahā kab milihau. . .

When shall I meet the immortal Lover,
the protector of devotees?
I am born in water, I love water,
I cry: thirst, thirst!
I am the *virahini* standing, waiting,
O beloved, for you,
Left the house, fell in love with you,
I am inclined on your feet.
Inside the heart there is such tension.
like the fish without water,
Day and night neither hunger nor thirst,
I am not happy at home or in courtyard,
The bed has become my enemy,
I be awake the whole night.
We are your maids, O Lord,
You are our Husband,
O kind and merciful, please come,
You are the powerful creator,
Either we leave our lives
Or you take me as yours,
Kabir Das says, *virahā* is increasing.
Please give me your glance.

(*Kabir*, H. P. Dwivedi, p. 329)

Talaphai bin bālam mor jiyā. . .

Without the Lover this being is restive,
The day is without peace, the night without sleep,
So I spent an uneasy night till morn.
The body and mind are constantly upturning,
like a Persian wheel, the life is wasted on an empty bed,
The eyes are tired, I see no way,
the Lord merciless has not remembered me.
Kabir says, listen, O *Sādhus*,
take away my pangs, sorrow has overtaken me.

(*Kabir*, H. P. Dwivedi, p. 329)

Piyā milan kī ās rahaun kab laun kharī. . .

How long shall I wait and stand
awaiting the Beloved?
I cannot ascend so high,
my mind is full of shyness,
My feet are not steady,
I fall in all directions,
I climb again and again,
I put my steps carefully,
My whole body shakes,
so am I afraid in different ways.
If the guile of my *Karma* encircles me
I may remain in illusion,
I am very young and innocent
and this path is very narrow,
Your gait is unsteady,
how shall I meet you?
Open the inner veil,
take the Word in heart,
Kabir Das says, He will see you
in your heart, O mad woman!

Āpanpau āp hi bisaro. . .,

One has forgotten oneself.
Just as a dog in a mirror-house
 barks at his own images,
Just as the tiger saw his own reflection
 and fell in the dark well,
So the mad elephant rubbed his ivory teeth
 on the white crystal rock,
The monkey had the sweet in his fist
 but went on dancing door to door.
Kabir says, you are the parrot of the forest,
 Who has caught and caged you?

(*Kabir*, H. P. Dwivedi, p. 344)

Aiso bharam biguchan bhāri. . .

Such an illusion in this vast creation—
Ved and Koran, Heaven and Hell,
 who is man, who is woman?
The vessel is made of clay,
 the *nād* and *bindu** is the same,
Once the pitcher is broken, by what name will it be called?
 O fool, search, you are lost,
The same bones and skin and urine and excreta
 and blood and ass-hole, one stamp,
The entire creation is by the same drop.
 Who is Brāhmin and who is Shūdra ?
Brahmā has *rajas* Shankar has *tamas*
 Hari has the *sat* quality
Kabir says, Ram is playing in every heart,
 what of a Hindu or a Turk!

(*Kabir Granthāvali* (ed.) SSD, p. 106)

**Lit.* sound and a drop. These words have an esoteric mystic significance.

Toko peev milengé, ghunghaṭ ké paṭ khol ré. . . .

You will meet your Lover,
You only open your veil.
The Lord dwells in every being,
why do you speak bitter words?
Do not be proud of wealth or beauty,
this five coloured apparel is false,
You burn the lamp in the palace of Void,
do not walk about in hope.
Waking and with great trouble I found
the dear Lover in the coloured palace.
Kabir says, it is Bliss,
the *anhad* drum is sounding.

(*Kabir*, H. P. Dwivedi, p. 350)

Rahnā nahi des birānā hai. . .

The home is not here, it is a stranger's land.
This world is a paper packet,
if a drop falls it will be washed off.
This world is a thorny thicket,
one gets entangled and is lost.
This world is trees and bushes,
if it catches fire, it shall be burnt.
Kabir says, listen, O *Sādhus*,
Satguru's name is the only goal.

(*Kabir*, H. P. Dwivedi, p. 308)

Budhiyā hānsi boli . . .

The old woman laughs and says, I am ever young,
who is younger than I, who is more feminine?
My teeth have fallen owing to chewing betel leaves,
my hair has fallen owing to Ganga bathing,
My eyes are gone owing to collyrium,
my life is spent in accepting *par-purush*,*
Know, males are my food,
I decorate myself for the unknown,
Kabir says, the old woman sings with joy,
she eats her children and husband.

(*Kabir Beejak* (ed.) Shukdeo Singh, p. 184)

Māyā mahā thagini ham jāni . . .

Maya is a great enchantress and a *thug*,
She has three qualities like a noose in her hand,
she speaks sweet words,
She becomes Kamalā for Keshav,
she is Bhavāni for Shiva,
She is the idol for the priest
she is the water in holy places,
She is the *jogin* for the *jogi*
she is the queen for the king,
She is diamond for some,
for some she is a broken *cowrie*,
For a devotee she is a she-devotee,
she is a Brahmāni for Brahmā,
Kabir says, listen, O Sādhus,
This is a tale never fully told.

(*Shabad, Kabir Sāheb ki Beejak*, Belvedere Press, P. 52-53)

**Lit.* the other man; lover.

Lāo bābā āgi jalāo ghara re . . .

Bring, O Bābā, fire,
set this house to fire,
Owing to it this mind
is engulfed in this commerce,
A witch lives in my mind,
she ever rises and stings my soul,
That witch has five sons
who make me dance day and night,
Kabir says, I am His servant
I remain cold with this witch.

(*Kabir*, H.P. Dwivedi, p. 311)

Aré in dovun rāh nā pāi. . .

Ah, both of them have lost the way,
Hindus call themselves superior
and do not let others touch their water-pot;
The same Hindu sleeps at the feet of the prostitute—
look at their Hinduism . . .
The Peer and Auliya of Muslims eat chicken,
I have seen the Hinduism of Hindus
and the Turkism of Turks,
Kabir says, listen, O Sādhus,
which way shall one follow?

Nā jāne Sāheb kaisā hai . . .

I know not what the Sāheb (Master) is really like.
The Mullā cries aloud from the mosque,
 is your Sāheb deaf?
If an insect had anklets on its feet,
 the Sāheb would hear even that sound,
You may tell beads, paint the forehead
 and wear long matted locks,
 but in your heart is the dagger of unbelief—
Not thus will you get the Lord.

(See *Kabir*, Tagore, p. 70-71)

Panḍit bād badanté jhoothā. . .

The Pandit argues all lies—
If by uttering the name Ram one could have salvation,
 by uttering 'sugar' the mouth would taste sweet.
By uttering 'fire' one could start a fire,
 be uttering 'water' one could quench the thirst.
As long as the parrot is within, it utters the name of Hari,
 but once it flies to the jungle it does not talk that way.
Your real love is with the sensuous pleasure and *māyā*,
 you only show your submission to Hari's devotees.
Kabir says, unless true Love is awakened,
 you will go to hell well bound (on the bamboo ladder).

[*Kabir Granthāvali* (ed.) M.P. Gupta, p. 170]

Nā main dharmī, nāhi adharmī. . .

I am not religious, I am not irreligious,
Neither a monk nor a lecher,
I neither babble, nor listen,
Neither a master nor a slave am I,
Neither bound, nor free,
Neither non-attached nor attached,
Neither aloof nor involved,
Neither do I go to hell,
Nor do I go to heaven,
All action is my doing
And yet I am beyond all action—
Such a faith is rare indeed,
One who has it is steadfast.
Kabir neither founds a faith
Nor destroys it.

(See *Kabir*, Tagore, p. 85)

Santan jāt nā puchcho nirguniyān. . .

Do not ask the caste of saints who are above caste,
Sādhus are Brāhmins, sādhus are Kshatriyas,
Sādhus are Banias,
Sādhus belong to all the thirty-six castes—
Why ask pointlessly?
Among Sādhus are barbers, washermen and carpenters,
Raidās the cobbler was a saint,
and Svapach Rishi was a scavenger,
Hindu and Moslem have alike been saints—
Where is the difference?

(See Tagore's rendering, *Kabir*, p. 1)
[*Kabir*, (ed.) H.P. Dwivedi, p. 233]

Terā merā manuā kaise ik hoire. . .

How can your mind and mine be one?
I say what I see with these eyes,
 you say what is written on paper,
I give the solution,
 you go on confusing,
I say, be on vigil,
 you always sleep,
I say, be beyond temptations,
 you are always tempted,
Ages have passed trying to make you understand,
 but no one listens.
You are like the prostitute all-destroying,
 you have lost all wealth,
The real guru is like a transparent flow,
 go and wash your body there,
Kabir says, listen, O Sādhus,
 Only thus it will be as desired.

(*Kabir*, H.P. Dwivedi, p. 324)

Monko kahān dhundé bandé. . .

Where do you look for me, my friend?
 I am very near you,
I am neither in the goat nor in the sheep,
 neither in the knife nor in the sword,
Neither in the hide nor in the tail,
 neither in the bone nor in meat,
I am neither in temple nor in mosque,
 neither in Kaabā nor in Kailās,
I am not in any ritual or rite,
 nor in yoga nor renunciation.
If thou be a true seeker,
 thou shalt find me in a moment.
Kabir says, listen, O Sādhus,
 He is the breath of my breath.

[*Kabir* (ed.) H.P. Dwivedi, p. 230]

Dohās of Kabir

If I call him heavy I am afraid,
if I call him light I am false,
How do I know Rām?
I have never seen him with these eyes.

He is so wonderful, they say,
that he hides all wonderment,
Even the Ved and Koran could not know Him,
who will believe in this hearsay!

The ways of the Actor are inscrutable,
you walk in your own speed,
Walk slowly and slowly,
you will reach the destination.

Eyes are turned into a room,
the eyeball is the bedding spread out,
I have dropped the *chik** of the eyelids,
I have won my Beloved's heart,

I would write a letter to the Beloved
if he is living in another land,
But He is in body, mind and eyes,
what message is to be sent to him?

I search in every mountain,
I lost my eyes weeping,
I did not get that medicine
which can re-liven the dead.

My eyes are burnt
every moment remembering thee,
Neither did I get thee, nor am I happy,
I am so anguished,

Happy is the world, it eats and sleeps.
Kabīr Dās is unhappy,
he wakes and weeps.

*Bamboo curtain.

Select Books on and by Kabir in Hindi and English

[This bibligraphy of Hindi books is prepared by Sri Krishnacharya of the National Library, Belvedere, Calcutta, and it also Includes the books by Kabir mentioned in 'Hindi Pustak Sahitya' by Dr. M.P. Gupta, 1942.]

On Kabir

AGRAVAL, TARAKNATH
Kabīr paricay. Bangiya Hindi Parishad, Calcutta, 1951.

BHATNAGAR, RAMRATAN.
Kabir sahitya ki Bhumikā. Ramanarayan Lal, Allahabad, 1950.

CHATURVEDI, PARASHURAM.
Kabīr-Sahitya ki Parakh. Bharati Bhandar, Allahabad, 1954.

BALI, TARAKNATH.
Yugadrastā Kabir. Vinod Pustak Mandir, Agra, 1957.

BHARATBHUSHAN 'SAROJ' AND SHARMA, SHRINIVAS.
Mahātmā Kabir, Hindi Sahitya Sansar, Delhi, 1558.

BHATNAGAR, RAMRATAN.
Kabir; 2nd ed. Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1948.

DWIVEDI, HAZARI PRASAD
Kabir; 2nd enlarged edition, Hindi Grantha Ratnakar, Bombay, 1960.

DWIVEDI, KEDARANATH.
Kabir aur Kabir Panth: Tulanatmak Adhyayan, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad, 1965.

GAUD, RAJENDRASINHA.
Santa Kabir Darshan: Sahitya Bhavan, Allahabad, 1955.

GUPTA, SHIVASARUP.
Kabir Sahitya Samiksa: Navayuga Pustak Bhandar, Lucknow, 1965.

KEAY, F. E.
Kabir and His Followers: Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1931. (A thesis approved by London University.)

MAINI, DHARMAPAL.
Kab ı ke Dhārmik Visvas. Bharatendu Bhavan. Chandigarh, n. d.

SHARMA, SARANMSINHA.
Kabir: Ek Vivechan. Hindi Sahitya Sansar, Delhi, 1960.
Kabir-Vimarsha. Bharata Bharati Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1962.
SHRIVASTAV, PURUSOTTAMLAL.
Kabir Sahitya ka Adhyayan. Sahityaratna-mala-karyalaya, Banaras, 1951.
TIWARI, BHOLANATH.
Kabir aur Unakā Kāvya. Rajkamal, Delhi, 1962.
TRIGUNAYAT, GOVINDA.
Kabir ki Vichāradhārā, Sahitya Niketan, Kanpur, 2nd ed. 1957. A thesis approved for Ph. D.
VARMA, RAMKUMAR.
Kabir ka Rahasyavād, Sahitya Bhavan Allahabad, 5th ed. 1944.
VIJAYENDRA SNATAK *ed.*
Kabir. Radhakrishna Prakashan, Delhi, 1955.

BY KABIRADASA

Akharāvali. Belvedere Press, Allahabad, 1913.
Anurāgsāgar. Gulshan A-Panjab Press, Rawalpindi, 1902.
—do—Visweswar press, Banaras, 1929.
Ātmabodh. Sukharamdas Madhirsinha, Hyderabad, 1901.
Bhanit Prakash, ed. by Paramanand Sadhu. Kohenoor press Lahore, 1883.
Bijak Vāni. Baharamji Phirojashah Madan, Bombay, 1810.
Bodhsāgar, ed. by Yugalanand, pts. 1-6. Venkateshwar Press, Bombay, 1906.
Ekottārā shatak. Venkateshwar Press, Bombay, 1920.
Hansamuktāvali. Ramlal Cayaldas, Surat, 1893.
Hansomukta-shabdāvali. Jagannathdas Gurbaksh, Bombay, 1905.
Jnānsamāj. Gurgamya, Hind press, Guljare 1869.
Kabir Bodh. Bhagavandas Ramji, Yavola, 1892.
Kabir Darpan. Sethvali Mohammad Pir Mohammad, Bombay, 1898.
Kabir Granthavāli. India Press, Allahabad, 1928.
Kabir Sāgar, ed. by Yugalanand. Venkateshwar Press, Bombay, 1806.
Ramaini. Light Press, Banaras, 1868.
Shabdāvali. Ganapatidas Lakshmandas, Tepari (M.P.).
Shabdāvali. Belvedere Press, Allahabad, 1922.
Shataka. comm. by Akheraya. Kabir Chaura, Banaras, 1901.
Upadesha-Ratnāvali. Bharatbandhu Press, Aligarh, 1882.
Bijak-Bhasya, comm. by Sadaphaladeva. Mukti pustakalaya, Balia, 1956.
Bijak Kabirdās, comm. by Vishvanath Sinha, Mohanlal Bhargava, Lucknow, 1915:
Bijak (*mool*). Bhargav Pustakalay, Banaras, n. d.
Kabir, ed. by Viyogi Hari, Sasta Sahitya Mandal, New Delhi, 1950.
Kabir Bījak (*mool*) Pustak mandir, Mathura, n. d.
Kabir Dohāvali, ed. by Mahendra Kumar Jain. Dakhsin Bharat Hindi

Prachar Sabha, Allahabad, 1952.
Kabir-Granthāvali, 5th ed., ed. with introd. by Shyam Sunder Das. N. P. sabha, Kasi, 1951.
Kabir-Granthāvali—Satik, with critical study and comm. by Puspapala Sinha. Ashok Prakashan, Delhi, 1962.
Kabir Sāhab ka Bijak Grantha, comm. by Prakasha Maniram Sahab and ed. Motidas Chentadas. Svasamved Karyalay, Baroda, 1955.
Kabir Sākhi-sangraha. Belvedere Steam Printing Works, Allahabad, 1912.
Kabir Sangrah, 5th ed., ed. by Sitaram Chaturvedi, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad, 1964.
Kabir Vacanāmrta, 2nd ed., ed. by Munshiram Sharma. Acharya Shukla Sadhana Sadan, Kanpur, 1955.
Mool Bijak comm. by Puran Sahab and rev. by Kasidas. Laksmivenkateshvar Press, Bombay, 1936.
Sākhi Grantha, 2nd ed., comm. by Maharaja Raghavadas. Babu Baijanath Prasad booksellers, Banaras, 1950.
Sanskrita Bijak Grantha. 2nd ed., tr. in Sanskrit by Hanumandas, ed. by Motidas Chetandas. Svasamved Karyalay, Baroda, 1950.
Sant Kabir. Sahitya Bhavan, Allahabad, 1943.
Sant Kabir ki Shabdāvali, comm. by Manilal Tulasidas Maheta. Vitthaldas Khemacandra, Ahmedabad, 1958.
Kabir-Sākhi Sār, ed. with an introd. by Taraknath Bali and comm. by Ramavasistha. Vinod Pustak Mandir, Agra, 1956.
Kabir ke Shabda. Pustak Mandir, Mathura, n. d.
Kabir Vacanāvali. ed. by Ayodhyasingh Upadhyaya 'Harioudh', 2nd ed. Nagri Pracharini Sabha, Varanasi, 1920.
Kabir-Granthāvali. A critical edition. Tiwari Parasnath, The Allahabad, University, 1961. (A thesis approved by Allahabad University in 1957.)

ENGLISH

WESTCOTT, G. H.
Kabir and the Kabir Panth 1907; Susil Gupta Ltd. 1965.
TAGORE, RABINDRANATH.
One Hundred Poems of Kabir, Macmillan & Co. Ist. ed. 1915

Titles in Makers of Indian Literature Series

A.N. Krishnarao	G.S. Amur
A.R. Rajaraja Varma	K.M. George
Anundoram Dhekiyal Phukan	Maheshwar Neog
Anundoram Barooah	Biswanarayan Shastri
Appar	G. Vanmikanathan
B.M. Srikantayya	A.N. Moorthy Rao
Baba Farid	Balwant Singh Anand
Balarama Das	Chittaranjan Das
Banabhatta	K. Krishnamoorthy
Bankimchandra Chatterjee	S.C. Sengupta
Basaveshwara	H. Thipperudraswamy
Bhai Vir Singh	Harbans Singh
Bharatendu Harishchandra	Madan Gopal
Bharati	Prema Nandakumar
Bhavabhuti	G.K. Bhat
Bhima Bhoi	Sitakant Mahapatra
Buddhadeva Bose	Alokeranjan Dasgupta
Chanda Jha	Jayadeva Misra
Chandidas	Sukumar Sen
Chandu Menon	T.C. Sankara Menon
Dr C.R. Reddy	D. Anjaneyulu
Dattakavi	Anuradha Potdar
Dayaram	B.J. Sandesara
Fakirmohan Senapati	Mayadhar Mansinha
Ghalib	M. Mujeeb
Goverdhanram	Ramanlal Joshi
Gurazada	V.R. Narla
H.N. Apte	R.B. Joshi
Haba Khatoon	S.L. Sadhu
Hali	Malik Ram
Hango Adigal	M. Varadarajan
Iswarchandra Vidyasagar	Hiranmay Benerji
Jaishankar Prasad	Ramesh Chandra Shah
Jayadeva	Suniti Kumar Chatterji
Jibananandadas	Chidananda Desgupta
Jnanadeva	P.Y. Deshpande
Kabir	Prabhakar Machwe
Kalhana	Somnath Dhar
Kamban	S. Maharajan
Kazi Nazrul Islam	Gopal Haldar
Keshavsut	Prabhakar Machwe

Kshetrayya	B. Rajanikanata Rao
Kumaran Asan	K.M. George
Lakshminath Bezbaroa	Hem Barua
Mahakavi Ulloor	Sukumar Azhicode
Maharshi Devendranath Togore	Narayan Chaudhuri
Manik Bandyopadhyay	Saroj Mohan Mitra
Manikkavachakar	G. Vanmikanathan
Manilal Dvivedi	Dhirubhai Thaker
Manmohan Ghose	Lotika Ghos
Meghani	V.J. Trivedi
Michael Madhusudan Dutt	Amalendu Bose
Mir Taqi Mir	Ish Kumar
Mira Bai	Usha S. Nilsson
Nammalvar	A. Srinivasa Raghavan
Nanalal	U.M. Maniar
Narmadashankar	Gulabdas Broker
Nazir Akbarabadi	Mohammad Hasan
N.C. Kelkar	R.M. Gole
Panje Mangesh Rau	V. Sitaramiah
Pothana	D. Venkatavadhani
Pramatha Chaudhuri	Arun Kumar Mukhopadhaya
Prem Chand	Prakash Chandra Gupta
Radhanath Ray	Gopinath Mohanty
Rahul Sankrityayan	Prabhakar Machwe
Raja Rammohun Roy	Saumyendranath Tagore
Ramalingar	G. Vanmikanathan
Sachal Sarmast	KB. Advani
Sarala Dasa	Krishna Chandra Panigrahi
Sarojini Naidu	Padmini Sengupta
Shah Latif	K.B. Advani
Sri Aurobindo	Manoj Das
Sudhindranath Datta	Amiya Dev
Surdas	Usha S. Nilsson
Surya Mall Mishran	Vishnu Dutt Sharma
Swami Brahmanand Tirth	J.C. Sathe
Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay	Mahasveta Devi
Tiruvalluvar	S. Maharajan
Toru Dutt	Padmini Sengupta
Tukaram	Bhalchandra Nemade
Tyagaraja	V. Raghavan
Vallathol Narayana Menon	B. Hradayakumari
Vedam Venkataraya Sastry	Vedam Venkataraya Sastry (Junior)
Veeresalingam	V.R. Narla
Vemana	V.R. Narla
Vidyapati	Ramanath Jha
Vrindavanlal Verma	Rajeev Saxena
Zinda Kaul	A.N. Raina

., who flourished in the fifteenth century, ꜗ probably the greatest lyric poet and mystic ᴜɪ early Hindi literature. His poetry and philosophy left a deep impression in centuries • llo' ut only on Hindi literature but a' ɔmmon man of northern India.

. Hinduism and Islam nearer ᴗ, zing and attacking the meaningless ɩuals and customs in both and by preaching that the ultimate goal of oth is one and identical.

